

10. THE MODEL REVOLUTION

In his speech in the Reichstag on 23 March 1933 Hitler said:

"Hardly ever has a revolution on such a large scale been carried out in so disciplined and bloodless a fashion as this renaissance of the German people in the last few weeks."

In his speech to the representatives of the foreign Press, delivered 6 April 1933, Hitler said:

Against the "intolerable terrorization" of the former political parties "stand the unheard of discipline and the unexampled self-control of the victorious Revolution. Not only did the retaliation bear no relation to the sufferings which had been endured but even where there was retaliation it was always given rein (*ausgelöst*) only through the necessity to break the opposition of the November-system.

In his speech to Leaders of the Party delivered at Munich on 22 April 1933 Hitler said that what distinguished this revolution from others was "that it had been successfully kept under discipline in the hands of leaders fully conscious of their aims.... The mark of the national uprising was that the power which sustained it was the National Socialist Movement which had been built up in the strictest discipline and had been tempered through struggle (*kampfgestählt*).... What had happened in Germany had been a unique, wonderfully elastic interplay between the impulsive popular Movement and the considered conduct of affairs by the leaders."

In his speech in the Sportpalast, Berlin, on 24 October 1933 Hitler replied to the charges of excesses and atrocities brought by the foreign Press; he said:

"When has there ever been a revolution so free from excesses (*Greuel*) as ours? In the days when there was revolution in Germany there was greater order than in many countries where there was no revolution.... Even if there were excesses, we could still stand comparison with the excesses of revolutions amongst other peoples. It is true we have to barricade the streets, but not because the people wants to stone the Government, but because the people wants to express to the Government its jubilation. I go any day amongst the people without a cordon of police. People can always know where I am and where I am going. I have not the least fear that the people may attack me: on the contrary my greatest anxiety is that perhaps a small child might be crushed before my motor."

"And if I compare the excesses of the French Revolution I can only say: We at least have established no guillotine, we have not created any Vendée in Germany. Even with the worst elements we have only kept them apart from the nation. Unfortunately the rest of the world declines to take them from us; we would so gladly put them at their disposal."

In his speech in the Reichstag on 30 January 1934 Hitler said:

"We have been able on the whole to guide this national resurgence in such a model fashion as has hardly ever been known in the past, except in the case of the Fascist revolution in Italy.... This is the imperishable service performed by the National Socialist Party and its organizations and the service performed by the Brown Guards. They prepared the German resurgence and carried it out and completed it almost without bloodshed and with unprecedented adherence to the programme."

In his New Year Proclamation of 1 January 1934 Hitler said: "Without the organization of our SA. and SS. we should all have fallen victims to the Red Terror.... Without the National Socialist Party, without the SA. and SS., even a German uprising could only have taken the form of a bloody and turbulent massacre; it is only thanks to the Party that one of the greatest revolutions in world-history was effected with such discipline, with such order that only in a single State in our own day could it find its model and its parallel — in the Italy of the Fascist Revolution. And it is not because of any fear of blood that we have carried through this Revolution without bloodshed, but only because of our profound sympathy with those whom we have always regarded only as misled, as seduced by lies."

On the character of the National Socialist Revolution in a speech delivered at Munich on 19 March 1934 Hitler said:

"The victory of a party is a change of government. The victory of a *Weltanschauung* is a revolution — and a revolution which effects a profound and essential transformation in the condition of a people. For the revolt of 1918 the word Revolution has indeed been used, but fundamentally it was only a change of Government. The same disastrous forces which formerly shared in the government of Germany did but appear more openly for all to see. Marxists and capitalists, the 'Fighters for Throne and Altar', the atheists all found their way to each other, because in fact they differed from one another in nothing. They knew no longer any differences as soon as it came to opposing the National Socialists.... In this struggle the National Socialists were the representatives of a real *Weltanschauung*, and thus this *Weltanschauung* produced a real revolution. This revolution has done more to effect a real inner transformation than all the Bolshevist revolts taken together. The March revolution of the year 1933 was in truth the spring revolution of the German people. A spring has now once more begun for us — in this spring we all live and in this spring we all are happy."

"There is no romance in world-history more wonderful than the development of our Party."

"It is a miracle which has been wrought upon the German people, and we do not wish to fall into the fault which seized upon the German people at the end of the war-years — ingratitude. What was accomplished last year is so unheard of that it should constrain us to the profoundest humility. It shows that the Almighty has not deserted our people: He received it into His grace at the moment Then it found itself again. And that it shall never again lose itself, that must be our vow so long as we shall live and so long as the Lord gives us the strength to continue the battle."

"History will never be able to lay to our charge that we wrought blind havoc. I believe that no revolution in the history of the world has proceeded and been conducted with more caution and skill (*Vorsicht und Klugheit*) than ours. Everything had been considered ten times over and we have taken not one step too many. No one in Germany should complain. If our enemies of the Red Flag had come to power, then in Germany as elsewhere we should have seen only a heap of smoking ruins. But today we see in Germany vigorous life."

In his Proclamation (30 January 1935) issued on the second anniversary of the assumption of power by the National Socialists Hitler said, speaking of the Revolution of 1933: "By the side of the fanatical fighters of our revolutionary National Socialist Party stood the soldiers of our army with its wealth of traditions. There was a mobilization of human forces of such vast range that hardly can anyone before our day have even dreamed of its like. Beginning with the bands of our youth in its millions and extending to the gigantic community of workers with head and hands united in a single Front, the Revolution bears its witness to the skill and the labor which National Socialists have spent on their organizations. It was not that an old world was broken in pieces but rather that a new world arose and superseded the old.... In no stage of our National Socialist advance, in no stage of our fighting did chaos rule. It was the most bloodless (unblutigste) revolution in the history of the world and yet the most decisive."

In his speech in the Lustgarten, Berlin, on 1 May 1936 Hitler said:

"When we came to power in 1933 the German people in those weeks found itself in the midst of a mighty historical transformation. A Revolution passed over Germany, but it was distinguished from other happenings of the same kind by the unheard of discipline which marked its advance and indeed its whole course. Although Germany outwardly presented a picture of the profoundest peace, yet internally there was carried through the greatest upheaval in the whole of German history — a Revolution which was legalized through the people's confidence, a Revolution which really did but sweep away that which in itself was already in ruins. This Revolution did not bring a new conception to the German people, it only finally won for a new conception general recognition."

In his speech to the Reichstag on 30 January 1937 Hitler said:

"Surely nobody will doubt the fact that during the last four years a revolution of the most momentous character has passed like a storm over Germany. Who could compare this new Germany with that which existed on the 30th of January four years ago, when I took my oath of loyalty before the venerable President of the Reich ?"

"I am speaking of a National Socialist Revolution; but this revolutionary process in Germany had a particular character of its own, which may have been the reason why the outside world and so many of our fellow countrymen

failed to understand the profound nature of the transformation that took place. I do not deny that this peculiar feature, which has been for us the most outstanding characteristic of the lines along which the National Socialist Revolution took place — a feature which we can be specially proud of — has hindered rather than helped to make this unique historic event understood abroad and among some of our own people. For the National Socialist Revolution was in itself a revolution in the revolutionary tradition."

"What I mean is this: throughout thousands of years the conviction grew up and prevailed, not so much in the German mind as in the minds of the contemporary world, that bloodshed and the extermination of those hitherto in power — together with the destruction of public and private institutions and property — were essential characteristics of every true revolution. Mankind in general has grown accustomed to accept revolutions with all these consequences somehow or other as if they were legal happenings. I do not mean that people endorse all this tumultuous destruction of life and property; but they certainly accept it as the necessary accompaniment of events which, because of this very reason, are called revolutions."

"Herein lies the difference between the National Socialist Revolution and other revolutions, with the exception of the Fascist Revolution in Italy. The National Socialist Revolution was almost entirely a bloodless proceeding. When the Party took over power in Germany, after overthrowing the very formidable obstacles that had stood in its way, it did so without causing any damage whatsoever to property. I can say with a certain amount of pride that this was the first revolution in which not even a window-pane was broken."

"Don't misunderstand me, however. If this revolution was bloodless that was not because we were not manly enough to look at blood."

"I was a soldier for more than four years in a war where more blood was shed than ever before throughout human history. I never lost my nerve, no matter what the situation was and no matter what sights I had to face. The same holds good for my Party colleagues. But we did not consider it as part of the programme of the National Socialist Revolution to destroy human life or material goods, but rather to build up a new and better life. And it is the greatest source of pride to us that we have been able to carry through this revolution, which is certainly the greatest revolution ever experienced in the history of our people, with a minimum of loss and sacrifice. Only in those cases where the murderous lust of the Bolsheviks, even after the 30th of January 1933, led them to think that by the use of brute force they could prevent the success and realization of the National Socialist ideal — only then did we answer violence with violence, and naturally we did it promptly. Certain other individuals of a naturally undisciplined temperament, and who had no political consciousness whatsoever, had to be taken into protective custody; but, generally speaking, these individuals were given their freedom after a short period. Beyond this there was a small number who took part in politics only for the purpose of establishing an alibi for their criminal activities, which were proved by the numerous sentences to prison and penal servitude that had been passed upon them previously. We prevented such individuals from pursuing their destructive careers, inasmuch as we set them to do some useful work, probably for the first time in their lives."

"I do not know if there ever has been a revolution which was of such a profound character as the National Socialist Revolution and which at the same time allowed innumerable persons who had been prominent in political circles under the former regime to follow their respective callings in private life peacefully and without causing them any worry. Not only that, but even many among our bitterest enemies, some of whom had occupied the highest positions in the Government, were allowed to enjoy their regular emoluments and Pensions."

"That is what we did. But this policy did not always help our reputation abroad. Just a few months ago we had an experience with some very honorable British world-citizens who considered themselves obliged to address a protest to me because I had some criminal protégés of the Moscow regime interned in a German concentration camp. Perhaps it is because I am not very well informed on current affairs that I have not heard whether those honorable gentlemen have ever expressed their indignation at the various acts of sanguinary violence which these Moscow criminals committed in Germany, or whether they ever expressed themselves against the slogan: 'Strike down and kill the Fascist wherever you meet him', or whether, for example, they have taken the occasion of recent happenings in Spain to express their indignation against slaughtering and violating and burning to death thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children. If the revolution in Germany had taken place according to the democratic model in Spain these strange apostles of non-intervention abroad would probably find that there was nothing which they need to worry about. People closely acquainted with the state of affairs in Spain have assured us that if we

place the number of persons who have been slaughtered in this bestial way at 170,000, the figure will probably be too low rather than too high. Measured by the achievements of the noble democratic revolutionaries in Spain, the quota of human beings allotted for slaughter to the National Socialist Revolution would have been about 400,000 or 500,000; because our population is about three times larger than that of Spain. That we did not carry out this mass-slaughter is apparently looked upon as a piece of negligence on our part. We see that the democratic world-citizens are by no means gracious in their criticism of this leniency."

"We certainly had the power in our hands to do what has been done in Spain. And probably we had better nerves than the murderer who steals upon his victim unawares, shunning the open fight, and who is capable only of murdering defenseless hostages. We have been soldiers and we never flinched in the face of battle throughout that most gruesome war of all times. Our hearts and, I may also add, our sound common sense saved us from committing any acts like those which have been done in Spain."

"Taking it all in all, fewer lives were sacrificed in the National Socialist Revolution than the number of National Socialist followers who were murdered in Germany by our Bolshevik opponents in the year 1932 alone, when there was no revolution."

"This absence of bloodshed and destruction was made possible solely because we had adopted a principle which not only guided our conduct in the past but which we shall also never forget in the future. This principle was that the purpose of a revolution, or of any general change in the condition of public affairs, cannot be to produce chaos but only to replace what is bad by substituting something better. In such cases, however, something better must be ready at hand. On the 30th of January four years ago, when the venerable President of the Reich sent for me and entrusted me with the task of forming a new Cabinet, we had already come through a strenuous struggle in our efforts to obtain supreme political control over the State. All the means employed in carrying on that struggle were strictly within the law as it then stood and the protagonists in the fight were the National Socialists. Before the new State could be actually established and promulgated, the idea of it and the model for its organization had already existed within the framework of our Party. All the fundamental principles on which the new Reich was to be constructed were the principles and ideas already embodied in the National Socialist Party."

"As a result of the constitutional struggle to win over our German fellow-countrymen to our side the Party had established its predominance in the Reichstag and for a whole year before it actually assumed power it already had the right to demand this power for itself, even according to the principles of the parliamentary democratic system. But it was essential for the National Socialist Revolution that this Party should put forward demands which of themselves would involve a real revolutionary change in the principles and institutions of government hitherto in force."

"When certain individuals who were blind to the actual state of affairs thought that they could refuse to submit to the practical application of the principles of the movement which had been entrusted with the government of the Reich, then, but not until then, the Party used an iron hand to make these illegal disturbers of the peace bend their stubborn necks before the laws of the new National Socialist Reich and Government."

"With this act the National Socialist Revolution came to an end. For as soon as the Party had taken over power, and this new condition of affairs was consolidated, I looked upon it as a matter of course that the Revolution should be transformed into an evolution."

Note

THE MODEL REVOLUTION IN THE SPEECHES OF GOERING

Reference may be made to some statements of Goering in illustration of Hitler's view of the Model Revolution. The police of Prussia could be in no doubt of what was expected of them: Goering's order ran:

"I assume that it is unnecessary especially to point out that the police must in all circumstances avoid giving even the appearance of a hostile attitude, still less the impression of persecution, against the patriotic associations (the Nazi Storm Detachments and the Stahlhelm). I expect from all police authorities that they maintain the best relations with these organizations which comprise the most important State-constructive forces. Patriotic activities and

propaganda are to be supported by every means. Police restrictions and impositions must only be used in the most urgent cases."

"The activities of subversive organizations are on the contrary to be combated with the most drastic methods. Communist terrorist acts and attacks are to be proceeded against with all severity, and when necessary weapons must be ruthlessly used. Police officers who in the execution of this duty use their firearms will be supported by me without regard for the effect of their shots; on the other hand, officers who fail from false considerateness may expect disciplinary measures"....

"Every official must constantly bear in mind that failure to act is more serious than errors committed in acting."

In an address delivered in February 1933 to police and other officials of Prussia Goering enjoined the strictest secrecy on the assembled officials because he knew that many of his instructions "conflicted with the present rights and laws of the Reich and its member States". He threatened with immediate dismissal any official who disclosed any detail of his confidential orders. "Every official who follows my instructions," he is reported to have said, "may be sure of my absolute protection. It is not his business to ask if his office may not be found guilty afterwards of transgressing the Constitution. There will be no attorney and no judge to punish an official for following the new course." It was not the business of any official, especially of any policeman, to inquire what happened in the houses of Storm Troopers: "even if weapons are piled mountain high in these houses, no police official has anything to seek there." Even if criminal offenses were committed by members of these households, it was not the business of the police, but that of the leaders of the SA. to make inquiries.

In March 1933 Goering said in a speech at Essen: "We assuredly wish to annihilate anything which opposes the people and the Nation. People say that the population is in a fearful state of excitement because the Jewish stores are temporarily closed: I ought to intervene. What after all has happened except that we Germans have called on Germans not to buy anything of Jews but only of Germans! I am told that I ought to set the police to work. Certainly I will set the police to work and ruthlessly wherever anyone attempts to harm the German people. But I refuse to admit that the police is a troop for the protection of Jewish stores. No, the police protects anyone who walks honestly in Germany; but it is not there to protect usurers. We live in extraordinary times: the Nation has been awakened. We stand by our word: the account shall be settled! Folk are so excited one might think that every morning there were some two or three thousand dead, and yet in the whole business no one has lost a nose or an ear."

"It is said that here and there someone has been carried off and ill-treated: one can only answer, 'where planing is carried on, the shavings fly'. [Goering later said that in 1933 there was much planing to be done, and therefore many shavings fell.] If we make many mistakes, still we will at least act and keep hold on our nerves. I would rather shoot sometimes too short or too far provided only I shoot!"

In a speech at Stettin on 17 March 1933 Goering said: "The settling up for the most accursed crime in Germany history, the settling up for that accursed November of 1918, will and must be carried through." Of the "Marxists" he said: "I will stick my fist into the necks of these creatures until they are done for."

In an interview with a correspondent of the *Telegraaf* Goering admitted that Jewish stores had been attacked, though he urged that the Revolution had been carried through with but little bloodshed. On 25 March 1933 he said that the daily toll of dead had not been greater than in the political conflicts of recent years; while Jews had been arrested and beaten, these excesses had now ceased. No one, he stated, had been blinded. Only in less than a dozen clashes had there been mortal injuries.

Goering's speech at Frankfurt a/M. (on 3 March 1933) deserves careful study. "I am not disturbed," he said, "when certain critics sanctimoniously excite themselves over the measures which I have taken and cry aloud for 'more justice'. I measure with two measures. I should not be just if I did not hunt the Red 'bosses' (*Bonzen*) to the devil."

"My measures will not be sicklied over by any juristic doubts — nor through any bureaucracy. Here it is no justice which I have to exercise: here I have only to annihilate and destroy — nothing else!"

"And you, Communists, in order that you may draw no false conclusions, know that I with my Brownshirts am carrying on a fight to the death and in this fight I will put my fist in your necks."

This is the man who was responsible for the conduct of the "Revolution in Revolutions", "the Model Revolution," which as he assured the Academy for German Law in his speech on 13 November 1934, had been conducted "with unheard of discipline and legality," as he wrote later, "as we look back from a somewhat greater distance upon the year 1933 we see that the Führer was justified when he said that no revolution had been carried through with such discipline as was the German Revolution of the year 1933."

Note

For Goebbels on the Model Revolution cf. *Signale der neuen Zeit*, 3rd edn., Munich, Eher, 1937, pp. 136, 215 ("not a little hair of any Jew in Germany was ruffled without good cause"), 239, 252 (repeats the planing simile), 303. Cf. also p. 301.